

there and increase the productivity of our country. I pledge, along with my other colleagues, to build on their example and on that vision. The day will come when we will all have a better transportation network as a consequence of their leadership.

Mr. President, I know that every member of the Congress is anxious to end this session and get back to our states. We all have work to do and families waiting to celebrate the holidays. However, my colleagues Senator LAUTENBERG and Senator BIDEN are right to be angry and frustrated with this legislation.

There is a small but extremely significant item missing from this legislation—the High-Speed Rail Investment Act. The Act would allow Amtrak to sell \$10 billion in bonds over the next decade and provide tax credits to bondholders in lieu of interest payments. Amtrak would use this money to upgrade existing rail lines to high-speed rail capability. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the bill would cost just \$95 million over 2 years. Over 5 years, the bill would still cost only \$762 million.

The High-Speed Rail Investment Act has 56 co-sponsors in the Senate. This is not a partisan issue. It is not a regional issue. It is not an urban issue. The High-Speed Rail Investment Act has the support of the National Governors Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Conference of State Legislatures. Nineteen newspapers, from the New York Times and Providence Journal, to the Houston Chronicle and Seattle Post Intelligencer, have called for the enactment of this legislation.

Let me explain why so many people and organizations support this legislation:

It is in our national interest to construct a national infrastructure that is truly intermodal. Rail transportation helps alleviate the stress placed on our environment by air and highway transportation. It is a sad fact that America's rail transportation, and its lack of a national high-speed rail system, lags well behind rail transportation in most other nations—we spend less, per capita, on rail transportation than Estonia, Myanmar, and Botswana.

There is a compelling need to invest in high-speed rail. Our highways and skyways are overburdened. Intercity passenger miles have increased 80 percent since 1988, but only 5.5 percent of that has come from increased rail travel. Meanwhile, our congested skies have become even more crowded. The result, predictably, is that air travel delays are up 58 percent since 1995.

In the air travel industry, bad weather in one part of the country very often results in delays in other parts of the country. There is consumer demand for more flights. But we know that our skyways and air traffic control systems are finite and that the system is overloaded.

Amtrak ridership is on the rise. More than 22.5 million passengers rode Am-

trak in Fiscal Year 2000, a million more than the previous year. FY 2000 was the fourth consecutive year that ridership has increased. We should welcome that increased use and support it by giving Amtrak the resources it needs to provide high-quality, dependable service.

High-Speed Rail Investment Act is critical to the future of Amtrak. For half the cost of constructing the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge linking Maryland and Virginia, we can create 10 high-speed rail corridors in 28 states. For the cost of the St. Louis Airport expansion, we can improve intercity transportation in 28 states. In October we passed a \$58 billion transportation appropriations bill for this fiscal year. What we are talking about today is an additional \$95 million over the next two years, which will leverage \$2 billion in funding. This is a sound investment.

There is an alarming misconception among some members of this body and around the country that Amtrak is a money pit, where taxpayer dollars simply disappear. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the federal government has invested \$380 billion in our highways and \$160 billion in airports since Amtrak was created. By contrast, the federal government has spent only \$23 billion on Amtrak. We have spent just 4 percent of our transportation budget on rail transportation in the last 30 years.

Those who criticize Amtrak for not "turning a profit" employ a double standard—a double standard that is misleading, unfair and unwise. Between 1985-1995, this country spent \$17 billion more on federal highways than it raised through the federal gas tax and highway trust fund. During the same period, the nation spent \$30 billion more on aviation expenditures than it received through the aviation trust fund. By their misguided logic, there can be only one solution: since neither of those trust funds operated at cost, we should eliminate these programs. That's nonsense. So why are we failing to adequately invest in rail transportation?

Mr. President, high-speed rail is a viable transportation alternative. There is a large and growing demand for rail service in the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak captures almost 70 percent of the business rail and air travel market between Washington and New York and 30 percent of the market share between New York and Boston. High-speed rail will undoubtedly increase that market share.

These new trains, like the Acela Express that debuted in the Northeast this year, currently run at an average of only 82 miles per hour, but with track improvements, will run at 130 miles per hour.

As a Nation, we have recognized the importance of having the very best communication system, and ours is the envy of the world. That investment is one of reasons our economy is the strongest in the world. And we should

do the same for our transportation system. It should be equally modern and must be fully intermodal. And in order to do that, we must invest in rail transportation, invest in Amtrak and be certain to include this inexpensive legislation in the last bill of the 106th Congress.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, before I yield, and I will continue to do so throughout the night, I say to my friends, my colleagues from Massachusetts and Delaware, that I am grateful for their comments. I am sure we will see, and I am particularly grateful to the majority leader and Democratic leader, an Amtrak bill on the floor early in the next session. I am sorry I will not be here, but in the meanwhile, I will yield to the majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, again I thank the Senator.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT VITIATED

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the earliest unanimous consent which was agreed to with regard to the time for handling the appropriations conference report be vitiating.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the receipt of the papers, the Senate now proceed to the debate relative to the appropriations conference report and that there be up to 40 minutes for explanation to be divided between the two leaders, with 45 additional minutes under the control of Senator GRAHAM of Florida, an additional 20 minutes under the control of Senator BYRD, and an additional 10 minutes under the control of Senator SPECTER. I further ask unanimous consent that once the Senate receives the conference report, the conference report be considered agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, all this immediately after the remarks of the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. LAUTENBERG.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. I thank Senator LAUTENBERG. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMTRAK

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I will not require more than a few moments to thank my friend from New Jersey and express confidence in the Senators

from Massachusetts and Delaware who have just spoken, to thank the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee and my revered friend, the ranking member, the Senator from West Virginia, and the majority leader.

May I say, sir—something we often lose sight of—this is a national issue and ought to be addressed by the Congress. We are the only major industrial state in the world that has not sought to recreate and revivify its rail system in the last generation.

The Committee on Environment and Public Works in the last 20 years has turned to this. In 1989, we passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, calling for just such measures—later the Transportation Efficiency Act. We created financial instruments and the possibility of investments to be involved.

We can do this. We are on the verge of it. To miss it at this moment would be to miss a moment in history for which I think we will not be happy. But I am so confident, from what I have heard today, that I leave the Senate yet more proud of having been here 24 years, thanking all—thanking particularly the Presiding Officer for his friendship and leadership in so many important matters.

I yield the floor with great satisfaction of what has just transpired. If this is the kind of mode we enter into in January, there is much to expect from the 107th.

Thanks to my friend from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York.

The majority leader made a private statement to me, which I will state publicly. He said, as we ready for my departure, bipartisanship is breaking out all over. And I am not quite sure how that is meant. But I yield up to 3 minutes to the Senator from Pennsylvania, with the understanding I retain the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the distinguished Senator from New Jersey for yielding to me. I compliment him for his leadership on Amtrak generally and especially on this current plan for financing.

I support Amtrak and believe the proposal to provide this additional funding is very much in the national interest. I think it is a very salutary thing, as some have already commented, that we have people extending their hands across the aisle on a matter of great national importance.

The Senator from Delaware, I think, characterized the situation very aptly when he talked about federalism; and that is, one region helping another region.

There is no doubt that those of us who live in the eastern corridor—and I am a beneficiary of Amtrak. It is 1 hour and 37 civilized minutes from

Washington, DC, to 30th Street Station in Philadelphia. But it is more than my convenience; it is the infrastructure of the country.

I think this is very good for the country that we are going to be moving ahead with this legislation next year, and a very good sign for the 107th Congress that hands are being extended across the aisle to show bipartisanship. If this carries forward in the next year generally, it will be very good for the American people.

I, again, thank my colleague from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for not only his comments but for his help. He is someone we counted on to work so closely with us, to bring seriously a bipartisan aspect to the protection that we are looking for to make sure that Amtrak—the national goal for railroading all across this country—will be able to continue.

It is obvious to me, as we have listened to the comments, that unless these investments are made now, or very soon, we will be unable to fulfill the objectives of having Amtrak as a self-sufficient entity operating with its operating budget met by the revenues that it derives. The funds that we will be able to get from this proposed bond issue will enable it to make the capital investment it so desperately needs.

SERVING IN THE SENATE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, one of the things I wanted to do, as I tried to plan my Senate objectives, was to make sure the children of our country were as protected as they could be by legislation that we developed in the Congress.

Under Republican leadership, when President Reagan was the President in 1984—Elizabeth Dole was the Secretary of Transportation—we were able to write a bill and create a law that made the 21-year-old drinking age the minimum drinking age for serving liquor across the country. Since that time, 17,000 families have been spared the need to mourn the loss of a child.

Mr. President, 17,000 youngsters, that is enough to fill a large arena. If one looked at the number of young people who would fill that arena, you would say: My Lord, are we lucky that these children have lived and will survive to their adulthood and through their full life because we were able to restrict their access to alcohol.

Therefore, it was appropriate, toward the later days of my career, that we were able to add another item of protection by lowering the blood-alcohol level to .08, a standard which will save an additional 500 to 700 lives a year. President Clinton recently signed that into law, as well. So I am pleased with the fact we were able to get that done. My team and I worked very hard to make that happen. It took several years for it to be accomplished, but accomplished it was.

A large part of that accomplishment, I must say, was because of our distinguished friend and leader—I think they would have a reference in totalitarian governments, but I mean it in the kindest way—as a leader for life, that Senator BYRD has brought to us, not only with his knowledge, his understanding of the process, but he is virtually the historian of the Senate. The thing that has always amazed me is he can do it virtually from memory, and bring us all to our senses about how we conduct ourselves and how we process legislation. I am not only so delighted and honored to have been able to serve with him as a mentor but as a friend as well.

We learn on a continuing basis in this place that Senator BYRD is someone to whom we can always turn, not only to understand his thinking on issues, and the decisions that he provides, but also his leadership.

We saw it manifest again this day because he wanted to help us out of the dilemma with which we were struggling, to find a way to get Amtrak the strength and resources that it needs, but reminding us at this moment there were so many things in front of us that it was not the time, but nevertheless was helpful in his reassurance that he, too, would help process this early in the next Congress. I just am sorry I will not be here to see the day when that takes place.

But I am grateful for the friendship and guidance that the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia has given me, and all of us, over these many years.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator yield?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I am happy to yield to the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator for his remarks. I shall miss him. We shall all miss him. He has served on the Appropriations Committee, and served well, served as chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, and served well.

He has the highest interests of the Nation always at heart. He has been a very capable Senator. He is never one to forget his obligations, his responsibilities, his duties to the people who have sent him here. I have considered it to be a great honor and high privilege to serve with the Senator. I shall miss him. I am sure he will continue to serve his country in some way.

But I do hope the Senator will come back and visit with us from time to time. May the Creator of the universe, Father of all of us, watch over and guide FRANK LAUTENBERG and his family. He is so proud of his family. He often speaks of his children, his grandchildren. I know they love him. He will always be in our recollection. May heavenly angels always attend him in whatever he endeavors.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from West Virginia.